

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 434
By Naifeh

A RESOLUTION to name University of Tennessee quarterback
Peyton Manning the first recipient of the
Achievement of Honor Award.

WHEREAS, the members of this general assembly are proud to honor Peyton Manning
for his outstanding accomplishments both on the football field and in the classroom, by naming
him the first recipient of its Achievement of Honor Award; and

WHEREAS, this award has been established by the speaker of the house of
representatives and the speaker of the senate to recognize exceptional achievements by
citizens of this state and will only be awarded with their concurrence when such achievements
occur; and

WHEREAS, from the moment he set foot on the hallowed Rose Bowl turf in Pasadena
as a true freshman in 1994, Peyton Manning endeared himself to Tennessee fans everywhere;
and

WHEREAS, Peyton threw for 1,141 yards and eleven touchdown passes that year, his
first to Kendrick Jones, directing the team to a 7-1 record in the games he started, including a
45-23 "basting" of Virginia Tech's Gobblers in the Gator Bowl; and

WHEREAS, in 1995, he more than doubled his freshman numbers by throwing for 2,954
yards and 22 touchdowns, leading his Big Orange brethren to victory over arch-nemesis
Alabama in the process. Peyton and the Vols "rolled" the Tide with a first quarter 80-yard

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touchdown pass to Huntsville native Joey Kent, setting the tone and leaving Crimson Tide fans seeing red for the first time in 9 years in the wake of the 41-14 Big Orange victory; and

WHEREAS, Peyton's first of many 300-yard passing games came earlier that year against Georgia, as the "Tennessee Rifleman" amassed a whopping 349 yards through the air; and

WHEREAS, he later "orchestrated" a 20-14 win over perennial Big Ten power Ohio State and Heisman Trophy winner Eddie George in the rain-soaked Florida Citrus Bowl; and

WHEREAS, widely respected and admired by players and coaches throughout the Southeastern Conference, Peyton was named to the All-SEC first-team by league coaches and finished sixth in the 1995 Heisman Trophy race; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, he amassed 3,287 yards through the air and again directed Coach Phillip Fulmer's Volunteers to a 10-win season, "declawing" the Big Ten's Northwestern University Wildcats 48-28, in the Citrus Bowl by passing for 408 yards and four touchdowns; and

WHEREAS, on what can only be described as an Orange-letter day in the history of Tennessee football and college football, Peyton spurned the National Football League draft after completing his junior season to return to his beloved Tennessee for his senior year, forever endearing himself to the Big Orange faithful; and

WHEREAS, in his sterling senior year, Peyton led the Vols to their first SEC East title en-route to passing for 3,981 yards and 36 touchdowns, and continued his mastery over the likes of Georgia, Kentucky, Vanderbilt, Ole Miss, and Alabama; he even directed the UT band in a stirring rendition of Rocky Top that will be ringing in the ears of Alabamans for many years to come; and

WHEREAS, Peyton threw four touchdown passes in the 1997 SEC Championship Game in Atlanta, and with the assistance of Jamal Lewis and a gritty performance by the defense, led Tennessee to an exhilarating victory over Auburn University; and

WHEREAS, during the 1997 campaign, Peyton threw 434 passes, with only nine interceptions; his career statistics for interceptions are even more impressive: he had a meager 2.31 percent career interception rate, being intercepted only 31 times out of 1,338 passes – the best record in NCAA history; and

WHEREAS, even though Peyton is a player truly committed to the concept of team play rather than individual awards, it is fitting that his career statistics, 11,363 yards passing and 89 touchdowns, distinguish him as the most prolific passer in Tennessee football history; and

WHEREAS, Peyton was the recipient of the coveted 1997 Davey O'Brien Award and the Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award as the National Collegiate Athletic Association's top quarterback; and

WHEREAS, he also won the *Football News*' Offensive Player of the Year Award and the prestigious Maxwell Award as college football's premier player, and was named first team All-American by the Associated Press, becoming only the second Tennessee quarterback, along with the great Bobby Dodd, to ever be named to the first team; and

WHEREAS, Peyton Manning recently finished second in the Heisman Trophy Award balloting, but distinguished himself as a gentleman and a Tennessean by congratulating the winner and demonstrating the qualities of good sportsmanship embodied by the award; and

WHEREAS, this assembly may disagree with the outcome of the balloting, but we understand that the reality we perceive and that which is reported by the press presents a strong argument that parallel universes do exist, and thus, we are not surprised that the press, coaches from other regions of the country, and the New York Downtown Athletic Club would disagree with our perception that Mr. Peyton Manning is the premier college football player in the country; and

WHEREAS, his athletic accomplishments aside, Peyton is as equally astute in the classroom; he graduated with honors in Speech Communications in just three years, was a

member of Lambda Pi Eta honor society, and received the distinguished Honda Scholar-Athlete of the Year Award; and

WHEREAS, the countless hours of community service he devotes to the Boys and Girls Club, the Make-A-Wish Foundation and schoolchildren throughout the state are a testament to the singular abilities of this fine young man; and

WHEREAS, although he is extremely popular with Tennessee fans, Peyton is especially gracious in giving credit to his teammates who have contributed immeasurably to the team's success the last four years, including fellow seniors: Buck Buxton, Jonathan Brown, Bill Duff, Terry Fair, Corey Gaines, Chris Hogue, Leonard Little, Andy McCullough, Marcus Nash, Tori Noel, Robert Poole and Trey Teague; and

WHEREAS, he is most appreciative of the love and support he shares with his proud parents, Archie and Olivia Manning; his brothers, Cooper and Eli; his paternal grandmother, Sis Manning, formerly of Humbolt; his maternal grandparents, Cooper and Frances Williams; and numerous other relatives and friends; and

WHEREAS, it is not often that a man of Peyton Manning's stature walks among us, and it is fitting that he should be honored for his contributions to the University of Tennessee and to Tennesseans from all walks of life, who are proud to call him this state's favorite son; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that this assembly recognize and honor outstanding citizens and the contributions they make to our great state by bestowing on them the General Assembly's highest award, the Achievement of Honor Award; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That the General Assembly hereby selects Mr. Peyton Manning as the first recipient of the Achievement of Honor Award in recognition of his many peerless contributions to the sport of football, to the University of Tennessee and to the state of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we thank Peyton Manning for his outstanding contributions to the people of Tennessee and extend to him our best wishes for every future success as he embarks upon what is certain to be a dynamic career in professional football.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation to Peyton, his parents, brothers and grandparents, with this final clause omitted from such copies.